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The Capital Report

U.S. Probing 2 Ex-CIA Aides For Ties to Terrorist Training

By David Shribman
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Federal prosecutors, who already have obtained indictments against two former CIA employees on charges of conspiring to smuggle explosives to Libya for terrorist activities, now are investigating allegations that the two men planned to recruit U.S. military personnel to train terrorists for the regime of Muammar Kadafi.

The new allegation came to light only a day after the Reagan administration ordered the expulsion of Libya's diplomatic mission and charged its diplomas here with provoking and supporting acts of international terrorism.

Sources close to the probe said a grand jury is investigating Edwin P. Wilson, an Upperville, Va., man already indicted on charges of smuggling explosives to Libya.

Wilson, an explosives expert who retired from the CIA in 1971, was reported last seen in Tripoli, the Libyan capital, and is regarded by officials close to the investigation as "an enormous source of embarrassment to this country."

Wilson and Francis E. Terpil, a former CIA employee from McLean reportedly last seen in Beirut, were indicted by a federal grand jury here last April on charges they conspired to smuggle explosives to Libya, to supply Libya with experts to build explosive devices and teach others to do so, to oversee and manage a terrorist training project and to kill a former member of the Libyan Revolutionary Council.

Prosecutors fear the two fugitives may escape trial, in part because the United States has no extradition treaty with Libya. A third man indicted in the case, California explosives manufacturer Jerome Sanford Brower, was convicted and now is in prison.

The new federal investigation is examining reports of terrorist recruitment and training since 1977. The investigation is expected to be concluded by the end of the summer.

The federal attorneys believe, however, that even if there are new indictments many of the new charges may never be prosecuted because current laws covering mercenaries have no provisions for prosecuting persons who go overseas as free-lance military advisers.

"There's a big hole in the law," said one of the prosecutors. In the earlier investigation, a grand jury handed down indictments charging that Wilson and Terpil obtained thousands of time-delay devices used in the construction of bombs and, with others, conspired to murder former Libyan Revolutionary Council member Umar Abdallah Mahayshi in Egypt.

The indictment charged they used their previous association with the CIA to recruit a murderer. It also charged that the two offered to supply assassination tools stored in the Libyan embassy in Switzerland, provided $30,000 in expense money and offered advice and technical assistance.

The assassination plan never was carried out, according to the federal prosecutors.

The indictment also charged that Wilson and Terpil failed to notify the State Department of their activities as agents of Libya and that they violated a number of arms and hazardous explosive statutes.

Another person, an unindicted co-conspirator not identified by the grand jury, allegedly ordered an American named John Wayne Harper to transform such items as ashtrays, lamps, alarm clocks and flower vases into bombs.

The indictment also charged that a separate effort to wire explosives to refrigerators, televisions, radios and attache cases resulted in an explosion that killed several Libyans and injured three American employees of Wilson.

Wilson and Terpil reportedly were identified after the CIA received two reports of the former employees' activities. The CIA conducted its own investigation and reported its findings to the FBI, which also undertook an investigation.

Terpil was arrested in December 1979 in the New York Hilton after undercover agents posing as Latin American revolutionaries allegedly paid him $56,000 as a downpayment on a $2 million order for 10,000 machine guns and 10 million rounds of ammunition. He failed to appear for trial, however. Allegations that former U.S. military personnel are involved in terrorist activities in connection with Libya have surfaced elsewhere. Eugene Aloys Tafoya, an ex-Green Beret, was arrested by the FBI in connection with the shooting of Faisal Abdulaze Zagallai, a dissident Libyan exile and graduate student at Colorado State University at Fort Collins.

Tafoya has been charged by Fort Collins police with attempted first degree murder and conspiracy and is being held in a county jail in Albuquerque, N.M.

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